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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/720,827

11/24/2003

Jacob De Baan

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06/15/2006

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EXAMINER

SINGH, SUNIL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3673

DATE MAILED: 06/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/720,827

Applicant(s)

BAAN, JACOB DE

Examiner

Sunil Singh

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– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 8,9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 8, "a dock" is recited; claim 1 calls for a dock, it is unclear if they are related.

Claim 9, "the columns" lack clear antecedent basis.

Claim 10 "the floor structure" lacks clear antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1,3,4,5,7,8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Great Britain (GB 2056391) in view Burbage et al. and Argy.

Great Britain '391 discloses an apparatus to transfer fluid from a first source (wherever member 15 is connected to) to a second vessel (12) in an off-shore environment comprising a partly submerged floating dock (3), variable buoyancy means (see page 2 line 5+) operable to alter the draught of the dock to enable engagement of the dock with the second vessel, a single point mooring system (2,9,10) attached to the dock, at least

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one rigid pipeline (see page 2 line 20+) attached between the first source and the dock via flexible connection means (see page 2 line 20+), and means (see Fig. 1, (13)) for transferring fluid from the dock to the second vessel. Turret (9) (see page 1 line 105+). British document discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, British document '391 is silent about the first source being a floating vessel and the pipeline being for cryogenic fluids. Burbage et al. teaches a first floating vessel (12, see col. 2 line 20+). Argy teaches cryogenic fluid pipelines are well known and old in the art for transferring cryogenic fluids (see col. 1 lines 5-10). It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify British document to include a first floating vessel and to use cryogenic pipelines as taught by Burbage et al. and Argy in order to transfer fluid from an offshore storage location and in order to transfer liquefied natural gas and the like.

With regards to claim 4, it would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the columns for the cross-sectional area of the columns at the water is in the region of 20 to 25 m (squared) since such a modification provides a stable platform.

With regards to claim 5, it would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the dock to accommodate tankers in the range from 50,000 to 150000 m (cube) since such a modification allows for different size tankers to receive oil etc.

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With regards to claim 8, it would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the distance the turret is placed from a leading edge of the dock to be approximately 20 to 50% of the length of the dock in order to increase stability.

4. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over British document '391 in view of Burbage et al. and Argy as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Reid, Jr. (US 3969781).

British document (as modified above) discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, the British document (as modified above) lacks two or more rigid pipelines and means to enable the return of fluid received at the dock from one pipeline to a second pipeline. Reid, Jr. teaches two or more rigid pipelines (see Fig. 10) and means (see Fig. 11) to enable the return of fluid received at the dock from one pipeline to a second pipeline. It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the British document (as modified above) to include two or more rigid pipelines and means to enable the return of fluid received at the dock from one pipeline to a second pipeline as taught by Reid, Jr. in order to increase the amount of hydrocarbon being delivered to the tanker or to return the hydrocarbon to the production barge for processing.

5. Claims 6, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over British document in view of Burbage et al. and Argy as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Chaney (US 3664286).

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British document (as modified above) discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, the British document (as modified above) is silent about the dock including ballasting means in the columns and including position control system and thrust production devices. Chaney teaches a dock including columns (21) and ballasting means (22,40) in the columns. Further, Chaney teaches position control system and thrust production devices (26,32). It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the British document (as modified above) to include the ballasting means and the positioning means as taught by Chaney since this allows for the dock to compensate for wind and wave forces and the changes in weight distribution during loading and offloading of the hydrocarbon.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 1 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

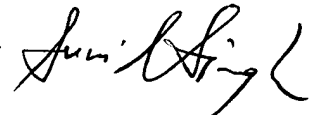
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sunil Singh whose telephone number is (571) 272-7051. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 10:30 AM - 7:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Engle Patricia can be reached on (571) 272-6660. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Sunil Singh
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3673



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6/7/06